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grees. Bull afterwards settled in Germany, and died at Lubeck, whence, curiously enough, sprung the greatest organist of the seventeenth century in Germany, Buxtehude, the model of John Sebastian Bach; a fact which renders it probable that the presence and example of the Englishman had not been without its influence.

The progress of music in England during the monastic ages, bears a favourable comparison with the rest of Europe. Bede tells us "that when Austin and the companions of his mission had their first audience of King Ethelbert, in the Isle of Thanet, they approached him in procession singing Litanies." But this was no new thing. St. Germanus had been heard to sing *Hallelujah* many years before the arrival of St. Austin. In 680, the Precentor of St. Peter's was sent over by Pope Agatho to instruct the monks of Weremouth in singing, and his reputation drew the masters of music from all the monasteries of the north to hear him. The earliest piece of secular counterpoint for voices is the Canon, in six parts, on the approach of Summer, of which the MS. is preserved in the British Museum. In 1430, minstrelsy appears to have taken precedence of chanting. Hearne relates, that at the annual festival of the Holy Cross at Abingdon, "twelve priests received only fourpence each for singing a dirge; and the same number of minstrels were each rewarded with two shillings and fourpence, besides diet and horse meat." But we may take a more picturesque illustration of the fact.

"In the year 1441, eight priests were hired from Coventry to assist in celebrating a yearly obit in the church of the neighbouring Priory of Maxtoke, as were six minstrels belonging to Lord Clinton, who lived in the adjoining castle of Maxtoke, to sing, harp, and play in the hall of the Monastery during the extraordinary refectory allowed to the monks on that anniversary. Two shillings were given to the priests, and four to the minstrels, and the latter supped with the sub-prior in the painted chamber, which was lighted with eight massy tapers of wax." At this early period traditional and individual skill had taken precedence of the science taught in the schools. The employment of minstrels at a funeral anniversary is suggestive. Many of these professors of the joyous science seem to have been classed among "the sturdy rogues and vagabonds" of the day; but the wildness and licence of the time must plead in mitigation of the judgment passed on our respectable musical ancestors.

To be continued.

ENGLISH OPERA.

A correspondent who writes to us on the subject of English Opera, *apropos* of the undertaking which is understood to be under consideration, and who wishes to have the law laid down touching the expediency of

all recitative being sung, to the exclusion of spoken dialogue—has opened a question which cannot be closed in a paragraph. He may be reminded that Italy is the only country where opera is exclusively carried on in music—whereas in Germany, France, England, where the languages are less mellifluous and the forms of conversation are less periphrastic, it has always been found difficult to arrange familiar parlance in a form which shall not sound ridiculous when sung:—and hence the comic operas of the three countries have mostly, if not always, been conducted in spoken dialogue. While our friend cites the custom of the *Académie Royale* of Paris, which includes Auber's lively 'Philtre,' he forgets that some of the finest French serious operas—as Grétry's 'Richard,' and Cherubini's 'Les Deux Journées' and 'Medée'—were produced with spoken text: also, that such is the usage throughout Germany with the operas of Mozart.—We are glad, however, to see that the question of the text for Music is beginning again to engage attention:—since we are satisfied that in proportion as it is neglected the chances of our having good and original opera-composers decrease. When we recollect that Dryden wrote for Purcell, that Milton, Gay, and Congreve, furnished the words to Handel, and that Addison disdained not to try his hand on an opera book,—when we recall the merry and pointed comic rhymes produced by Harry Carey for Lampe to set in his burlesque "Dragon of Wantley,"—when we indicate that Milton and Metastasio were treated by Arne,—or, to take a more modern instance, when we remind those who treat us as cavillers of the anxious and intelligent pains taken by Sheridan that his "Duenna" should be sensible not *nonsensible* as a drama (purposely limiting our illustrations to English examples) we cannot feel that our desires are Utopian or their execution without precedent in the story of our own stage.—*Athenæum*.

MUSIC, A MEANS OF POPULAR AMUSEMENT AND EDUCATION.

(Abridged from Sharpe's London Magazine.)

THE question we have to answer is this—*Can we contrive to make popular amusement a means of education and refinement?* Can such new, genuine, cheap amusements for the working classes be provided as shall have this desirable influence? The answer we supply by telling what has been done in one instance.

There is a market town on the borders of Norfolk and Suffolk, which once had mickle fame, for that a proud baron who had his castle there, from it hurled his defiance against "the king of Cokenaye;" and which of late years has had a better claim to renown as the source of some of the best and most accessible editions of the great classics of England. During this past summer there was assembled here, one evening, in a spacious and elegant room, once the theatre, and now, on market-days, the corn hall, a mixed but most cheerful company. It was the periodical festivity of a singing class, which has for some years been successfully carried on by a gentleman of the town. Beside the class, which numbers eighty members, there were nearly 200 visitors present, most of them working-people, servants, apprentices, &c.; but with a considerable proportion from the classes above them, tradespeople from the town, farmers and landowners from the surrounding country, clergymen, dissenting ministers, and their families.

Seated in groups, arranged with methodical irregularity, so that none should be below "the salt," in their best dresses, and in their best behaviour too, every one feeling